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ABSTRACT

This manual provides rehabilitation service provider organizations with necessary information and instructions for completing an Information Request Form (IRF), the first step in the process of applying for recognition by the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange (RRX) Project as an exemplary program model in the area of supported employment. The RRX concentrates on identifying exemplary programs for people with disabilities in five states: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. This manual provides information about: (1) the background and purposes of the RRX; (2) service categories identified as priorities for review of exemplary program models; (3) program review procedures and criteria; (4) procedures for completing the Information Request Form; and (5) the technical assistance responsibilities of programs designated as exemplary. A sample IRF completed by an agency providing supported employment services is attached. (DB)

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REGIONAL REHABILITATION EXCHANGE

MANUAL FOR COMPLETING THE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

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. . . Promoting Exemplary Programs

FC 30206

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MANUAL
FOR COMPLETING THE
SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Department of Education, Cooperative Agreement #H133D10017. These contents, however, do not necessarily represent the policy of that agency, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government. In compliance with appropriate state and federal laws and regulations, all programs administered by and all services provided by the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange of the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital or veteran status, or the presence of a non-job-related medical condition or handicap. This publication of the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange (RRX) project is made possible through a cooperative agreement of $200,000.00 from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) of the U. S. Department of Education. This project is funded 100% through federal funds.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

Purpose

The Regional Rehabilitation Exchange Project (RRX) has developed this manual for public/private school and community-based service provider organizations and programs interested in gaining recognition as an exemplary program model in one of the RRX's designated service categories. These categories, identified by a project advisory council composed of policy makers, practitioners, and people with disabilities, currently include:

- School-to-Adult Life Transition Services,
- Supported Employment Services, and
- Independent Living Services.

Definitions for each of these service categories are provided following this section of the manual.

Examples of organizations and programs eligible for exemplary status include:

- public or private community-based rehabilitation service providers
- independent living centers, independent living service providers, and independent living programs
- public or private school-based transitional programs
- vocational training programs
- other providers of direct services to people with disabilities

Exemplary status can greatly benefit both your program and other service providers. For your program, exemplary status can mean broader public awareness of your services, evidence of program effectiveness for continued or increased funding support, and links to other programs like yours. For other programs, it means greater access to models and information about "what works" in the field. The long-term result is expanded and improved services for people with disabilities.

To be identified as an exemplary program model by the RRX, you must go through a review process. This manual is designed to help you through the first, most critical, step in the process: completion of an RRX Information Request Form.

Manual Contents

This manual offers information about the:

- background and purposes of the RRX,
- service categories identified as priorities for review of exemplary program models,
- program review procedures and criteria,
- procedures for completing the Information Request Form, and
- implications for programs designated as exemplary.

This manual includes a copy of a sample, completed Information Request Form (IRF) that you may use as a guide as you complete your own IRF.

Suggested Steps in Completing the IRF

1. **Read through this entire manual** before you begin to complete the IRF, to become familiar with the review process, the terms used, and the information required.

2. **Look closely at the definitions of service categories** that follow this introductory section. Be sure that your program or activity fits the category you have in mind. You are free to apply for exemplary status in any appropriate category, even if it is different from the category for which you were originally nominated.

   Notice that some service categories - for example, independent living - require you to select and complete one or more information subcategories.

3. **Review the Information Request Form** and make a quick list of the kinds of information you will need to properly complete the form. Think about the possible sources you can tap for this information, for example:

   - files, records, and documentation systems,
   - budgets,
   - annual or other reports to funding sources,
   - grant applications, or
   - program staff.

4. **Go through the IRF again,** matching questions with information sources and identifying questions for which ready answers seem not to exist.

5. **Make a plan for obtaining or compiling any missing information** that is needed. For example, many programs do not track program service delivery costs as they apply to a specific program or population. You may need to:
   - identify the relevant program costs (be sure to include costs for staff and overhead),
   - identify the number of people with disabilities served, and
   - calculate per-person costs to provide services within each category.

6. **Call the RRX if you don't understand** how to respond to a question, and/or if you need advice about how to collect missing information. One service the RRX can provide is to assist you in developing documentation systems and procedures that will help you to complete the review process.

7. **Begin answering the questions contained in the IRF,** even though you may not have all the necessary information at hand. Once you begin, you may discover that you know more than you first thought. Again, if you have questions or problems, feel free to call the RRX.

For More Information

If you have questions or need more information about pursuing the program review process or gaining recognition as an exemplary program, contact:

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(512) 476-2286 (FAX)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSES OF THE RRX PROJECT

The Regional Rehabilitation Exchange (RRX) Project was initiated in March 1983, when it first received funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR). The RRX surveys the education, vocational rehabilitation and independent living communities for programs that demonstrate and can document especially effective service delivery to persons with disabilities and can serve as models for other agencies and organizations. Using a detailed, uniform evaluation procedure that includes peer review, the RRX reviews nominated programs that are especially effective and recognizes them formally as exemplars. These exemplary programs generally demonstrate a high success rate, surpass established performance standards, show significant and stable results, are cost-effective, and include adaptable or transportable components.

One of NIDRR's goals is to promote the widespread use of proven, effective programs among disability service professionals. To address this goal, the RRX publishes and disseminates an annual *Catalog of Exemplary Programs* that contains individual summaries describing each program receiving exemplary designation. The *Catalog* is provided to a wide audience of administrators, practitioners, teachers, and consumers interested in learning about the identified exemplary programs. In some instances, the RRX can broker and provide in-depth technical assistance to agencies or organizations interested in implementing an exemplary program design in their organization.

By identifying exemplary programs, informing the disability service community about their operations and outcomes, and supporting organizations interested in implementing exemplary program model components, the RRX hopes ultimately to contribute to the continued improvement in services provided to people with disabilities.

SCOPE OF THE RRX PROJECT

The RRX generally concentrates on identifying exemplary programs from the five states in Region VI: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. The service area categories, or "core areas", in which programs are currently reviewed and identified as exemplary, include:

- School-to-Adult Life Transition Services,
- Supported Employment Services, and
- Independent Living Services.

Definitions of these core aeas are provided below.

- **SCHOOL-TO-ADULT LIFE TRANSITION SERVICES** are a coordinated set of activities for a special education student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promote movement from school to post-school activities, including:
    - post-secondary education,
    - vocational training,
    - continuing adult education,
    - integrated supported employment or competitive employment,
    - adult services,
    - independent living, and
    - community participation.

The coordinated set of transition-oriented activities shall be based upon an individual's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Activities can include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school and adult living services, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

- **SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES** are designed to enable people with severe disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Such services generally provide training, placement, and ongoing, long-term support that is necessary for people to continue employment. These programs, then, do not lead to unassisted competitive employment; they are designed for people with disabilities so severe that they are not eligible for traditional vocational rehabilitation services. Within this category, exemplary programs may focus on one or more of the following specific elements of supported employment services:
  - innovative, creative funding arrangements;
  - services for specific disability groups; and/or
  - characteristics of effective job coaching.
- **INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES** include a broad range of services designed to improve the quality of life for people with severe disabilities via organizations and programs that are controlled by the consumers of those services themselves. Such services may include: (1) housing, (2) transportation/mobility, (3) living skills, (4) counseling, (5) community integration, and/or (6) employment-related services. Each of these areas is described below.

  Housing services may include information and referral services; assistance with financial arrangements; provision of accessible housing; skills development focused on home safety, cleaning and maintenance, in-home mobility, and/or food planning and preparation; and any other services necessary for a person with a severe disability to obtain and maintain a desired level of independence in the broad area of housing.

  Transportation/mobility services involve the development of personal and community resources to facilitate and increase mobility. Services may range from assistance with vehicle modification or purchase of a modified vehicle, to assistance of appropriate public transportation, to skills development in orientation and mobility.

  Living skills services include training and assistance related to daily living needs. Services may include skills development related to communication, personal hygiene and dress, and problem-solving; provision of adaptive equipment or devices; and/or specialized training for personal attendants.

  Counseling services may range from peer support services to ongoing individual counseling aimed at development of specific behaviors. Group counseling, personal and social adjustment counseling, sexuality counseling, and/or referral to appropriate professional counseling resources may be provided within this category.

  Community integration services may involve a range of activities, including individual/group advocacy, recreation, consumer skills development, and/or training in basic academic skills. General activities facilitating implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act at the community level may be addressed in this section.

  Employment-related services address a variety of issues related to employment of people with severe disabilities. They may include direct employment services such as job or career development, job placement, or supported employment services; training or support related to job modification, retention, or mobility; and/or community and employer awareness efforts focusing on the benefits of hiring people with severe disabilities.

PREREQUISITES FOR PROGRAM REVIEW

Each program nominated for consideration as exemplary must meet a set of prerequisites. Before further program evaluation occurs, each nominated program must first assure that it:

- has clearly defined program goals, objectives, and activities;
- is performing activities that correspond to one of the current RRX core areas;
- has been in existence for at least two years prior to consideration as exemplary by the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council, and expects to continue operation for at least one year past the time of annual *Catalog* publication, or has received a waiver from the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council;
- meets necessary state/federal certification or accreditation requirements, where applicable;
- can demonstrate program effectiveness through accumulated documentation of program services and consumer outcomes;
- has kept records of expenditures for a recent twelve-month period in the categories of personnel, facilities, equipment, and materials;
- is able to provide descriptive program information through the Information Request Form and an onsite visit;
- is willing to share descriptive information with interested professionals through telephone, letter or site visits;
- will keep records of these contacts and report to the RRX; and
- is willing to act as technical assistance consultant to assist other schools or organizations wishing to adopt or adapt the exemplary program to their own system.

Staff of the nominated program will conduct a self-assessment for compliance with these prerequisites. If all requirements are met, nominated program staff will proceed with the review process by completing the Information Request Form and returning it to the RRX for analysis.

CRITERIA USED IN REVIEW

Since its inception, the RRX has developed, expanded, and refined the review process by which exemplary programs are identified. The criteria used for review have evolved into a system consisting of eleven separate critical factors. These factors are related to a weighting system that assigns to each a specific weight relative to its importance in the evaluation process. The RRX Peer Review Advisory Council has adopted these criteria as being those characteristics of critical importance to be considered in the classification of all exemplary programs. Following is a list of these critical factors.

1. Program Goals and Objectives
2. Target Population
3. Consumer Involvement and Satisfaction
4. Documentation/Good Record Keeping
5. Success Rate
6. Cost-Effectiveness
7. Comprehensiveness

8. Evaluation Criteria
9. Staffing Patterns
10. Transportability
11. Innovativeness

The chart on the following page provides brief descriptions of each critical factor.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

The RRX program review procedures have been developed to identify those programs that are exemplary or outstanding in their results. It utilizes an evaluation system that applies a set of criteria to descriptive program information together with an onsite observation to determine whether the documented program effects are truly outstanding.

The schematic on the next page illustrates the sequence of events that constitute the RRX review process. The process is begun when a potential exemplary program is identified, either by persons within that program or by an outside third party well-acquainted with the program. RRX staff contact the nominees to determine whether they meet the review prerequisites and if they desire to undergo the review procedures by providing information about the program. If so, the nominee completes an Information Request Form and forwards it to RRX staff, who analyze it by applying a weighted information system.

After evaluating a program in regard to the data provided on the completed Information Request Form and according to the critical factors previously described, RRX staff may eliminate a nominated program from further consideration. Reasons for this decision might include:

- failure of the nominated program to correspond with one of the core areas identified by the Peer Review Advisory Council;
- insufficient outcome data, however defined by the program;
- inadequate descriptions of program operation; or
- incomplete follow-up data.

If a program nominee is eliminated from further consideration, RRX staff will provide a written notification to program representatives, and no onsite visit will be planned. If application of the review criteria indicates that the nominated program should be reviewed further, an onsite visit will be scheduled.

The RRX has published a Manual for each current core area. Each Manual is available in accessible formats, upon request. Copies of any of the Manuals may be obtained by contacting the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange.

CRITICAL FACTORS AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

In reviewing each program, RRX staff analyze specific characteristics to determine the extent to which the nominee provides descriptive information addressing each critical factor.

The RRX Peer Review Advisory Council has not established absolute standards for each critical factor. For example, a program need not address each critical factor to the same extent for it to be

RRX
Critical Evaluation Factors

CRITICAL FACTOR	WEIGHT FACTOR	DISCUSSION
Program Goals and Objectives	*	Are program goals adequately reflected in program activities?
Target Population	0.50	What are the characteristics of the consumer group served by the program, e.g., age, education level, type/severity of disability?
Consumer Involvement and Satisfaction	1.00	Are consumers and/or family members actively involved in the implementation of the program?
Documentation	1.00	Are records related to consumer entry/exit, placement, follow-up, and program costs complete, up-to-date, and accessible?
Success Rate	0.75	Has the program developed measures for success which are objective, quantifiable, and appropriate to the priority area?
Cost-Effectiveness	0.25	What per consumers costs are required to deliver program services?
Comprehensiveness	0.25	Does the program provide a full range of consumer services appropriate to achieving program goals?
Evaluation Criteria	0.50	By what methods are the outcomes of program operation assessed, by whom, at what intervals, and for what purposes?
Staffing Patterns	0.50	What types/number of staff, and with what qualifications, are required to implement the program?
Transportability	0.50	Can the program be replicated in another location with the expectation that similar results will be obtained?
Innovativeness	0.50	Does the program embody a novel approach to addressing the rehabilitation-related issue?

* This factor is the initial point of elimination. Programs not satisfying this criterion will be considered ineligible for exemplary status and will not undergo further consideration in terms of the remaining nine criteria.

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RRX REVIEW PROCESS

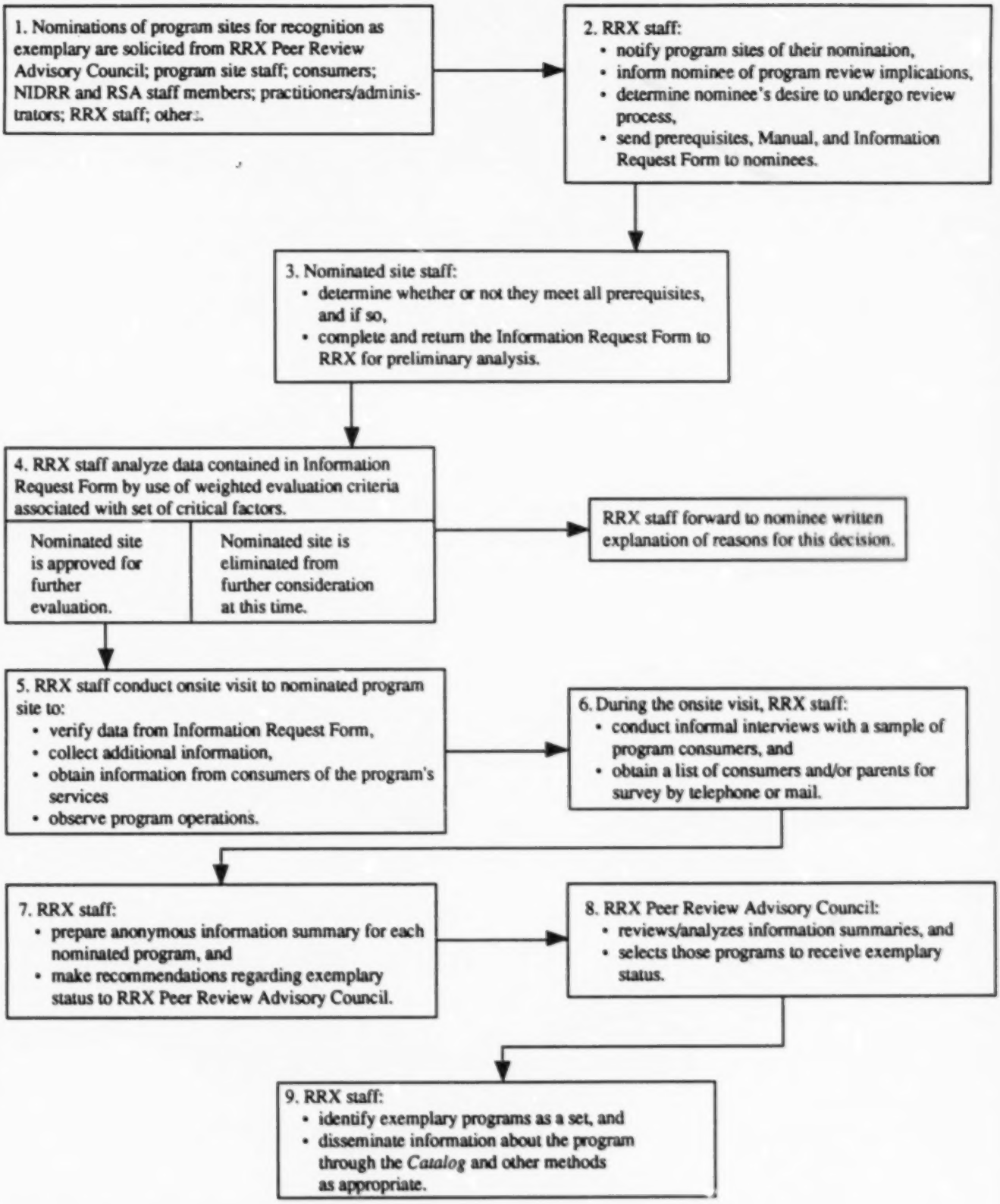
1. Nominations of program sites for recognition as exemplary are solicited from RRX Peer Review Advisory Council; program site staff; consumers; NIDRR and RSA staff members; practitioners/administrators; RRX staff; others.
2. RRX staff:
• notify program sites of their nomination,
• inform nominee of program review implications,
• determine nominee's desire to undergo review process,
• send prerequisites, Manual, and Information Request Form to nominees.
3. Nominated site staff:
• determine whether or not they meet all prerequisites, and if so,
• complete and return the Information Request Form to RRX for preliminary analysis.
4. RRX staff analyze data contained in Information Request Form by use of weighted evaluation criteria associated with set of critical factors.
Nominated site is approved for further evaluation.
Nominated site is eliminated from further consideration at this time.
RRX staff forward to nominee written explanation of reasons for this decision.
5. RRX staff conduct onsite visit to nominated program site to:
• verify data from Information Request Form,
• collect additional information,
• obtain information from consumers of the program's services
• observe program operations.
6. During the onsite visit, RRX staff:
• conduct informal interviews with a sample of program consumers, and
• obtain a list of consumers and/or parents for survey by telephone or mail.
7. RRX staff:
• prepare anonymous information summary for each nominated program, and
• make recommendations regarding exemplary status to RRX Peer Review Advisory Council.
8. RRX Peer Review Advisory Council:
• reviews/analyzes information summaries, and
• selects those programs to receive exemplary status.
9. RRX staff:
• identify exemplary programs as a set, and
• disseminate information about the program through the *Catalog* and other methods as appropriate.

FIGURE 1

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
1. Program Goals and Objectives	Program develops and maintains community-based work opportunities, for people with severe disabilities. Program delivers ongoing, continuous services needed by these individuals to keep their jobs. Workers receive a range of employment-related benefits, although they may be compensated at less-than-competitive pay rates. Program is sensitive to the individual needs and wants of consumers and reflects this sensitivity in information that is disseminated about the program.	IIIA, IIIB, IIIC, IIID, IIIE, IIIF, IIIG
2. Target Population	Consumers in the supported employment program: • have severe disabilities, • are usually ineligible for traditional VR services, • have a history of non-employment or under-employment, and • require ongoing, continuous services after job placement to maintain their employment.	IIA, IIB, IIC, IID, IIE, IIF, IIG, IIH, IVE
3. Consumer Involvement and Satisfaction	The supported employment program actively involves comsumers by: • encouraging consumer freedom of choice in determining whether or not they participate in supported employment activities, • expanding consumer awareness and understanding of community-based employment options, • determining employment interests, preferences, likes and dislikes and using this consumer-provided information to guide job development/ placement • regularly soliciting feedback from the consumer and/or family members regarding job satisfaction after placement, and • providing assistance to locate another, more appropriate employment placement, if the original placement is not appropriate.	IIIE, IIIG,IVC,VIIB

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FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
4. Documentation/Good Record Keeping	The supported employment program has complete, up-to-date records on: • consumer demographics, • consumer referral and intake, • consumer assessment/evaluation, • consumer job placement, • program costs, • program outcomes, including - consumer progress from the time of program entry, - type and extent of ongoing services required for job maintenance, and - consumer movement to different employment positions, if applicable, and • consumer satisfaction	IIA, IIB, IIC, IID, IIE, IIF, IIG, IVA, IVB, VIA
5. Success Rate	Consumers move from school/institution/sheltered workshop to supported employment, and maintain that employment, as reflected in: • number of consumers working in community-based employment, • types and variety of employment positions, • wage rates, • stability of employment, and • small rate of failure to maintain employment. A reasonable balance exists between providing on-the-job training and ongoing services, and encouraging consumer independence.	IVA, IVB, IVC, IVD, IVE
6. Cost Effectiveness	The supported employment program can provide information to compare program benefits vs. costs by computation of the following equations: • total annual program budget divided by total number of consumers served annually, and • total annual program budget divided by total number of consumers working annually in supported employment positions.	VIA, VIB

FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
	Information is available to determine the extent to which the program has access to and depends upon external resources/assets for its operation.	
7. Comprehen-siveness	The supported employment program offers an appropriate range of work task options and support services as required for consumer job maintenance. There is evidence of concern for benefits generally derived from competitive employ-ment, such as: • fringe benefits, • quality of work environment, • opportunity for integration and socialization with non-disabled co-workers, • job mobility, • employment security, • job satisfaction, and • quality of life.	IA, IB, IC, ID, IIH, IIID, IIIE, IIIF, IIIG, IVC, VIIA, VIIB, VIIC
8. Evaluation Criteria	To plan, develop, report, and refine its activities, the program considers the extent to which: • program goals are met, and • local consumer-based rehabilitation and independent living needs are addressed. Also considered is the improvement in program outcome as compared to those levels that were demonstrated before the supported employment program was implemented. The program provides feedback to program staff about the effec-tiveness of their work. The program can translate evidence of program effectiveness into a rationale for recognition as an exemplary model.	IIIA, IIIH, III I, IIIJ, IVA, IVB

FIGURE 1 (continued)

CRITICAL FACTOR	CHARACTERISTICS	ITEMS ON INFORMATION REQUEST FORM
9. Staffing Patterns	Supported employment program staff, both collectively and individually, are: • adequate in number to manage and implement the program efficiently, • sufficiently well qualified and trained, • able to meet any specialized program needs, and • available to provide the necessary on-going support services required individually by consumers for job maintenance.	VA, VB
10. Transport-ability	Enough evidence exists to warrant the expectation that the supported employment program could be implemented elsewhere, with similar resources, and produce similar results. The program may: • be an adaptation of a similar program existing elsewhere, or • have been adopted/adapted by another organization.	VB, VIIC, VIID
11. Innovative-ness	The program is original in that it: • addresses/solves a unique rehabilitation or independent living problem, or • embodies a new idea in the field. The program also offers a unique combination of characteristics related to: • target population, • success rate, • comprehensiveness, and • transportability.	Information is reflected in those items on the IRF relating to these 4 critical factors. During the onsite visit, information may also be collected.

deemed exemplary. However, addressing only a few factors extensively to the relative exclusion of most of the others may jeopardize the program's selection as exemplary. During the Peer Review Advisory Council's review, information is compared on all related programs nominated for exemplary status. For this total set, a limited number of programs are selected depending on the relative cross-rankings resulting from the comparison process.

In their selection of exemplary programs, members of the Peer Review Advisory Council bear in mind one of the RRX Project's primary priorities: to develop a pool of technical assistance resources representing a wide range of diverse approaches to disability service issues. There may be a number of in-region programs conducting similar activities and producing similar outcomes. It is probable that only one representative of like programs will be recognized, although several may offer worthy programs.

IMPLICATIONS OF EXEMPLARY PROGRAM DESIGNATION

Benefits of designation as an exemplary program are frequently derived from the recognition as a model to be emulated by others. It is possible to gain regional, as well as national, recognition as a unique, innovative, and effective program. This recognition earned from the larger disability service community often enhances the local community opinion of the exemplary program.

To increase awareness of identified exemplary programs and to encourage their adoption or adaptation by other service organizations, the RRX annually publishes and disseminates the *Catalog of Exemplary Programs*, which contains detailed descriptions of all programs identified by the RRX Peer Review Advisory Council. Copies of the *Catalog* can be obtained by contacting the RRX.

All programs awarded exemplary status accept the responsibility to serve as a technical assistance resource to other agencies or organizations interested in implementing similar program components elsewhere. Representatives of exemplary program models should be willing to:

- make a presentation on the exemplary program model at scheduled meetings/conferences
- share exemplary program model-related information with interested service providers through telephone contacts, written correspondence, or onsite visits
- maintain periodic communication with RRX staff to report any contacts that appear to have the potential to result in a technical assistance activity
- assist RRX staff in identifying service providers that might be appropriate to receive technical assistance
- act in the role of a consultant to provide technical assistance to other organizations wanting to adopt or adapt the exemplary program, or one of its components, in their own service delivery systems; all formal technical assistance activities of this nature are scheduled in a manner mutually acceptable to exemplary program staff and staff of the adopting organization and are specified in a detailed *Memorandum of Agreement* signed by all parties involved, including the RRX
- prepare a report documenting the details of the technical assistance provided and any plans for follow-up with the adopting agency or organization
- provide feedback to RRX staff regarding the appropriateness and perceived effectiveness of technical assistance activity

As indicated in these exemplary program responsibilities, specific methods to encourage continued involvement with the RRX may include making formal presentations at local, statewide, and professional meetings or conferences. Such presentations allow the exemplary program staff to describe more fully to professional colleagues the operations and outcomes of the exemplary program.

In addition to the conference or workshop attendance, exemplary program staff may be requested to provide limited, more directed technical assistance and training to organizations interested in components of exemplary programs.

COMPLETING THE INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Example The following pages contain an example of a completed Information Request Form.

Application Complete this particular form only if your program provides Independent Living Services. **DO NOT** follow this example if your program lies in any core area other than Independent Living Services. Separate Manuals are available for programs in other core areas.

Purpose The sample Information Request Form will provide information about possible responses to specific items. This is for demonstration purposes only and should not direct the content of the respondent's answers.

Program Because each nominated program has unique characteristics, answers to Information Request Form items may vary considerably.

Important The example which follows is **NOT** intended to reflected the desired response from any persons completing the form.

Attachments After completing the Information Request Form, attach any additional comments or program-related information you believe will help RRX staff to evaluate your program.

Questions If you have questions or need more information when completing the form, contact the Regional Rehabilitation Exchange, **(512) 476-6861 (Voice/TDD)** and **(512) 476-2286 (FAX).**

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Regional Rehabilitation Exchange

SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

Supported Employment Services

INFORMATION REQUEST FORM

Supported Employment Services are designed to enable consumers with severe disabilities to secure and maintain employment. Such services generally provide training, placement, and ongoing, long-term support that is necessary for consumers to continue employment. These programs, then, do not lead to unassisted competitive employment; they are designed for persons with disabilities so severe that they are not eligible for traditional vocational rehabilitation services. Within this category, exemplary programs/models may focus on one or more of the following specific elements of supported employment services:

- innovative, creative funding arrangements,
- services for specific disability groups, and/or
- characteristics of effective job coaching.

For the Identification of Exemplary Programs

EXAMPLE

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE LARGER ORGANIZATION

PROGRAM NAME: Work Opportunities Program

ORGANIZATION NAME: Excellence, Inc.

ADDRESS: 6807 Rearden

CITY/STATE: Houston, Texas ZIP CODE: 77054

CONTACT PERSON: Homer Friberg PHONE (713) 555-4853

TITLE Director of Supported Employment

I. BRIEF ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION

A. What services are provided by your organization/facility?

- ☒ PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES
- ☒ VOCATIONAL EVALUATION
- ☒ JOB PLACEMENT
- ☐ SPEECH AND HEARING
- ☐ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ☒ VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- ☒ VOCATIONAL COUNSELING
- ☐ REHABILITATION ENGINEERING
- ☐ RESIDENTIAL SERVICES
- ☒ OCCUPATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING
- ☒ ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
- ☐ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)
- ☒ Technical Assistance
- ☐ _____

B. How would you classify your organization/facility?

(CHECK ONE)

- ☒ PRIVATE NON-PROFIT ORG.
- ☐ PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT ORG.
- ☐ STATE AGENCY
- ☐ FEDERAL AGENCY

COMMENTS:

(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- ☐ VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTION
- ☐ SHELTERED WORKSHOP/ACTIVITY CENTER
- ☐ HOSPITAL-BASED REHABILITATION
- ☐ OUTPATIENT MEDICAL REHABILITATION
- ☐ REHABILITATION FACILITY (RESIDENTIAL)
- ☒ REHABILITATION FACILITY (NON-RESID.)
- ☒ COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATION
- ☐ PRIVATE PRACTICE PRACTITIONER
- ☐ PROJECT WITH INDUSTRY
- ☐ OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

_____

C. Does your organization serve persons classified as severely disabled?

☒ YES ☐ NO

If yes, what percentage of the total consumer population would be classified as having a severe disability?

Approximately 75%.

EXAMPLE

How is severity of disability defined?

According to state agency guidelines, for various disability types.

D. What types of certification are currently held by your organization?

Type of Certification	Area	When Obtained	Date of Expiration
CARF	Vocational Adjustment	Feb. 1988	Feb. 1995
Dept. of Human Serv.	Level II	Aug. 1989	August 1994

EXAMPLE

II. CLIENT DESCRIPTION

A. How many consumers are presently receiving services in the supported employment program?

46

B. Consumers in the program:

- range in age from 22 to 51 years;
- have an average age of 29 years;
- have achieved an average educational level of 8th. grade; and
- range in educational levels from 0 grade to 11th. grade.

C. List the major categories of disability groups (and the respective number of consumers in each) for those consumers currently in the supported employment program. Please be specific when describing the disability group, e.g., mental retardation (mild-moderate versus severe-profound) or mental illness versus long-term mental illness.

DISABILITY GROUP CATEGORIES	NUMBER
Mental retardation (mild-moderate)	8
Mental retardation (severe-profound)	19
Traumatic brain injury	3
Visual impairment	5
Long-term mental illness	7
Spinal cord injury	4

D. What number of supported employment program consumers would be classified according to each of the following living arrangements?

	NUMBER
independent living	17
supported/supervised living	8
institutional	16
living with family	5
other:	

EXAMPLE

E. What are the sources of referrals made to the supported employment program?

State vocational rehabilitation agency; state commission for the blind; state developmental disability authority; county mental health agency; self.

On average, how many referrals to the program are made by each of these referral sources, on an annual basis?

VR - 30 DD - 15 Self - 10

CB - 10 MH - 10

F. What types of consumer evaluation information are available to you when consumers enter the program?

Medical evaluation; psychological evaluation; social history; vocational evaluation.

How is it used? The information contained in these assessments helps to determine appropriateness for supported employment programming. In addition, this information may suggest the need for additional, in-house evaluations, especially those related to specific work skills.

G. What additional evaluation information, if any, is collected once consumers are admitted into the supported employment program?

Assessments in simulated work settings may be conducted to determine appropriateness of job placement preferences expressed by the consumers. Formal neurological/psychological assessments are conducted by professionals outside the organization.

H. Do program consumers receive supportive services from outside agencies? Yes.

If so, what types of services are provided, and from what source(s)?

County MH Outreach Program - counseling/medication
State Commission for the Blind - accommodations for visual impairments
SSI/SSDI payments

EXAMPLE

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. When was the supported employment program begun? Spring 1984

Why was it begun?

To provide paid employment opportunities in the community to persons with severe disabilities.

B. Provide a brief history of the supported employment program from its beginnings to the present time. (Attach an additional page, if necessary.)

See brochure describing the history of the Work Opportunities Program enclosed with this document.

C. How does the supported employment program fit into the overall organizational structure? (Please attach an organizational chart, if available.)

(See attached organizational chart)

D. Through what sequence of steps would a "typical" consumer progress from the point of program entry through program exit? Include any general organizational services that may precede or follow supported employment services. (You may wish to use a flow chart to illustrate the sequence of steps in this process.)

1. Intake
2. Development of detailed consumer profile
3. Job placement
4. On-the-job training
5. Ongoing support

E. What specific activities are undertaken to: (use an additional page if necessary)

1. gauge consumer desire or interest in being involved in supported employment activities?

During the intake process, consumers are asked to indicate why they would like to be employed. Family members are also encouraged to express their interest in and support for community-based job placement.

2. expand the level of consumer awareness and understanding of employment options available in the community?

Consumers are given information about the types of jobs currently available in the community - pictures, photographs, films, and video tapes are used to give an idea of what a particular job is like and where it might be performed. Group tours to local businesses are provided, and employers and other supported employment participants who are presently working are invited to address the group to talk about work and their particular places of employment.

3. assess consumer job-related skills and abilities?

Consumers are observed during situational assessments and are also given the opportunity to participate in job shadowing activities in order to demonstrate job-related skills and abilities that may suggest what supported employment positions would be most appropriate.

EXAMPLE

4. identify consumer preferences, likes, and dislikes regarding employment options?

Detailed consumer profiles are developed, including information regarding employment preferences. Specific likes and dislikes concerning particular types of jobs, and their characteristics, are solicited from supported employment program participants.

5. develop community-based employment possibilities?

Employers are contacted by job developers and are given an overview of supported employment and its benefits to the employer. Members of a Business Advisory Council (BAC) are often called upon to assist in the job development effort, and many placements have been made in the businesses represented by BAC members themselves.

6. collect detailed job-specific information on identified supported employment positions?

Employer profiles, site analyses, and job analyses are produced once employers have agreed to the possibility of hiring a supported employee. These profiles and analyses contain detailed information describing employment positions and the context in which they exist.

7. teach consumers work-related, but not job-specific, skills (e.g., transportation, grooming, money management, etc.)?

Training goals and objectives are developed that address a range of work-related behaviors. Any necessary training to meet these goals and objectives is provided to consumers at regular intervals by program support staff members. The training is coordinated with consumers' families or residential staff members.

8. match consumers to available supported employment positions?

Information contained in detailed consumer profiles and employer/job profiles is compared, and by using a compatibility analysis procedure, consumers and jobs are matched.

EXAMPLE

9. provide on-the-job training?

After the placement is made, the job coach conducts a task analysis and provides one-on-one job coaching until an agreed-upon performance standard has been attained and maintained for some period of time. Follow up job coaching is provided in the event that the job changes over time, or the employee assumes different job responsibilities.

10. insure maximum consumer social integration with non-disabled persons in the workplace?

A work "buddy" is identified through an assessment of interested co-workers, and both consumers and co-workers are given training in developing relationships on the job. Employees are encouraged to participate in company events and to participate in lunch and break activities.

11. monitor consumers' job performance/productivity?

Performance is monitored daily, documented weekly, and reported monthly. Employee performance standards are reviewed periodically and compared to consumer performance levels. Workers are evaluated quarterly, and additional training or re-training is offered in response to changes in measured levels of productivity.

EXAMPLE

12. assess consumer job satisfaction?

Satisfaction is assessed formally during quarterly performance evaluations. Informal assessments are conducted by the job coach in an ongoing manner. In either case, if satisfaction is found to be lacking, procedures exist to increase satisfaction with the current job, or to locate another position with which the employee will be more satisfied.

13. assess employer satisfaction?

In addition to ongoing monitoring of employer satisfaction conducted by the job coach, formal assessments are conducted semi-annually. Information from employers that is less than desirable is dealt with in a manner that is mutually satisfactory to the employer and the employee.

14. help consumers retain their jobs?

Employer training is provided to increase employer and co-worker sensitivity to the particular needs of the supported employee. In addition, ongoing monitoring and feedback to employees helps to identify "red flags" as soon as possible, so that they can be dealt with and any problems that they imply can be resolved quickly.

15. assist consumers to locate a more appropriate job if the initial placement is inappropriate?

Through the feedback provided by the consumer and their families, degree of job satisfaction can be indicated. If a consumer expresses an interest in changing jobs to one that is more desirable or appropriate, program staff will assist in further job development, placement and on-the-job training.

F. Describe in detail the range of ongoing services that are offered and provided to consumers once intensive job-related services have faded.

Ongoing support services include on-the-job monitoring of workers, support to families in regard to finances (e.g., SSI, SSDI), assistance in obtaining help as necessary from other service providing agencies, and weekly "post-employment seminars" for all supported employees.

G. Is there a "core" set of services delivered to every consumer, or does service delivery vary according to each consumer's needs and abilities?

The sequence of steps listed in D., above, is the core of the program. Services may be individualized as necessary, depending upon the needs and wants of any particularconsumer.

If there is variation in the scope or sequence of service delivery for individual consumers, on what consumer-specific criteria is this variation based?

Type and severity of disability, employment placement, level of on-the-job training needed, and job-related difficulties which may be present.

EXAMPLE

H. Does the supported employment program attempt to identify future job needs?

Yes, by keeping in close touch with the local business community.

If so, how is this information used to modify program activities?

It may suggest the need for varying types of placement options: individual vs. enclave, for example, or job-sharing.

I. How is the effectiveness of the supported employment program measured?

By the number of consumers placed in employment positions that reflect their personal preferences, and being able to maintain them in those positions unless they request a change.

J. Given the response to III.I, why do you feel that the supported employment program is outstanding or exemplary?

The program has tried to be responsive to individual client needs and wants while also meeting the requirements of local community employers for productive, efficient, and dependable employees.

EXAMPLE

IV. PROGRAM OUTCOMES

A. Describe the supported employment placements that have resulted from the program that have been documented across a recent 12-month period. For each disability group, indicate the numbers of consumers entering the supported employment program and the numbers of consumers placed, types of employment positions occupied, number of hours per week employed, and approximate hourly wage.

In reporting disability group categories, consider the person's primary disability as determined by medical or psychological information. If more than two disabilities are present, please list in a "multiple disabilities category." **DO NOT** include a consumer in more than one disability category.

The consumer data contained in the following table describe the 12-month period from October 1, 1990 through September 30, 1991.

Disability Category	Number of Consumers Entering Program	Number of Consumers Placed	Type of Employment Position	Hours per Week	Hourly Wage
Mental retardation (mild-moderate)	11	4 4	service clerical	25 20	$4.00 3.70
Mental retardation (severe-profound)	24	10 6 3	benchwork service mach.trades	20 30 22	3.50 3.60 3.80
Traumatic brain injury	3	3	clerical	30	4.00
Visual impairment	8	2 3	profess processi	2 20	8.50 5.25
Long-term mental illness	10	3 3	se sale ch cal	20 28 30	4.00 5.50 7.00
Spinal cord injury	5	4	clerical	25	4.25

EXAMPLE

B. For those consumers described in the previous question, please indicate the numbers who have remained in the original employment position as noted, for the amounts of time provided below:

Number of months maintained in supported employment	Number of Consumers
3 months	4
6 months	7
9 months	10
12 months or longer	25

C. Supported employment programs should be designed to produce benefits for participants that are similar to those generally received from work. Please provide any available data which relate to each of the following measures of such benefits to the supported employees.

See enclosed Annual Report for more data.

1. employee benefits (e.g., insurance, leave, pension plans, etc.)

Fringe benefits have included such things as uniforms, paid vacation leave, paid holidays, paid sick leave, merchandise discounts, health insurance, and discounted/free meals.

2. quality of the work environment

Information is gathered during job development and employer analysis activities. The Better Business Bureau is sometimes contacted to obtain additional information.

3. degree of consumer social integration at the workplace

Job coaches collect data regarding observed consumer integration and encourage participation of supported employers in on-site and off-site activities with co-workers.

4. opportunity for advancement/job mobility

During the last fiscal year, 30 supported employees received promotions and/or increases in salary.

5. stability/security of employment

Consumers are placed in jobs that would appear to offer job security; our record in job maintenance suggests that stability of employment is being addressed appropriately.

6. company-sponsored social activities

Supported employees are encouraged to participate in social activities outside of work. Job coaches devote time to fostering interpersonal relationships with co-workers.

7. job satisfaction

As noted previously, job satisfaction assessments are conducted informally by the job coach on an ongoing basis; in addition, quarterly assessments are conducted in a more formal manner to determine level of satisfaction with the job placement.

EXAMPLE

8. quality of life

We feel that community-based, integrated employment positions substantially improve quality of life. We also involve the consumer in planning for and maintaining employment, to allow personal control and input to the employment process.

D. What other outcomes have been demonstrated by the program?

The program has been recognized by the local chamber of commerce as well as the governor's committee as being especially effective in placing and maintaining in employment persons with disabilities.

E. In your judgment, what are the common characteristics of program consumers who succeed in making a relatively smooth transition from a school/institution/sheltered workshop or other setting to a supported employment position?

- Strong desire to be employed
- Openness to new challenges
- Patience and perseverance in working to achieve personal goals
- Willingness to involve a wide range of advocacy and support systems
- Ability to make personal preferences known

EXAMPLE

V. PROGRAM STAFF

A. The following staff are involved in providing supported employment program services:

Job Title	No. Staff	% Time	Primary Job Roles
Director of Supported Emp.	1	75	Administration, coordination, community liaison
Job Developer	4	100	Employer/job development, site management
Placement Specialist	2	100	Employer/job analysis, monitoring
Job Coach	16	100	Job coaching, individual case management
Consultant	2	100	Community-based assistance and referral, behavior management

EXAMPLE

B. What specific activities/materials/curriculum are used for training supported employment program staff members?

A job coach training curriculum has been developed for use with new supported employment program staff members.

Are these activities/materials documented and available for use by other agencies or organizations?

Yes.

VI. PROGRAM COSTS/INCOME

A. Costs associated with providing the current level of supported employment program services ON AN ANNUAL BASIS are as follows:

Category of Cost	Dollar Amount
Personnel	$560,225
Facilities/Space	70,140
Equipment	8,500
Materials	22,360
Transportation	58,500
Other:	
TOTAL	$719,725

EXAMPLE

B. In your judgment, what kinds of costs might be associated with "start-up" of a similar supported employment program in another organization or agency? These "start-up" costs would not be expected to continue past the first year. Please estimate the anticipated level of expenditures across broad cost categories.

Personnel	$175,000
Training	10,000
Facilities/Space	30,000
Equipment/Supplies	17,500
TOTAL	$232,500

VII. INVOLVEMENT

A. Does the organization utilize a community-based Advisory Board or Board of Directors to provide input and guidance to the supported employment program?

Yes.

B. Does the supported employment program solicit input and feedback from consumers and their families in an effort to provide a means of "consumer investment" in program operations?

Yes. Consumers and their families are regularly asked to offer feedback regarding their satisfaction with the program. In addition, they are asked during the intake process to provide any input into how they could best be served by the program.

C. Does the supported employment program disseminate brochures or other public information concerning its operations and outcomes?

Yes, to local business, the chamber of commerce, local service organizations, and local offices of funding agencies.

If so, please attach a copy of these publications.

See attachments.

D. Has the supported employment program provided training or other assistance to any other organization or agency interested in implementing the program?

Yes.

If so, what is the organization and where is it located?

Employment Options, Inc.
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Service Systems
El Paso, Texas

EXAMPLE

E. Is there any reason to assume that the supported employment program might not be transportable to another organization and produce similar results as have been documented in your agency?

No, our service strategies could be adapted for use in another organization, given the appropriate mission, commitment, training, and technical assistance.

If so, please explain.

QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE LARGER ORGANIZATION

Three categories of Specifics of Supported Employment are noted below. Please check the appropriate categories and provide information for those categories of Specifics of Supported Employment for which you wish to have your supported employment program considered for exemplary status, by completing the section indicated in parenthesis below.

- ☐ Innovative and Creative Funding Arrangements (complete Section A)
- ☐ Specific Disability Groups (complete Section B)
- ☒ Effective Job Coach Characteristics (complete Section C)

A. INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

1a. Are state/federal "program start-up" monies for supported employment being used?

1b. If so, what is the approximate funding level represented by this start-up funding?

1c. When is program start-up funding scheduled to end?

2. Are you receiving funds for Supported Employment that are based on fee-for-service? If so, please describe.

EXAMPLE

3a. From what financial sources do you provide long-term, ongoing services for consumer case-management once the consumer's supported employment position has reached a maintenance level?

3b. How do these long-term funding sources vary according to the primary disability of the consumer being served?

3c. What provisions exist for providing necessary consumer accommodations on a long-term basis (e.g., attendant services required to maintain employment)? Please identify below any unique accommodations provided and the funding source for each.

Accommodation	Funding Source

EXAMPLE

4a. On average, what is the per-consumer cost required to place, train, and "stabilize" a supported employment consumer on a job?

4b. What is the cost range (low to high) represented by the average per-consumer cost provided above?

5a. How many hours of intensive, on-the-job training by a job coach are usually required to stabilize a supported employment consumer in a job? Specify in as much detail as is appropriate.

5b. How much "calendar" time (e.g., in days or months) is generally required to stabilize a supported employment consumer before job coach fading is complete?

5c. How do these time estimates vary according to the primary disability of the consumer placed in a supported employment position?

EXAMPLE

B. SPECIFIC DISABILITY GROUPS

1a. What specific disability groups are employed through the supported employment program? Please provide information regarding numbers of persons in each primary disability group who have received supported employment services during a recent 12-month period. Note secondary disabilities where possible.

For the period from _____ through _____, the following numbers of persons have received supported employment services:

Disability Group	Number

1b. If the supported employment program has employed persons with those disabilities identified below, please provide the following information:

Disability	Number
Mild/moderate Mental Retardation	
Severe/profound Mental Retardation	
Traumatic Brain Injury	
Long-term Mental Illness	
Dual Diagnoses	

2. Is there a specialized sequence of activities through which consumers with a particular disability progress which is different from that which consumers with other disabilities follow?

3. If so, please describe how these sequences of activities are different, for different groups.

EXAMPLE

4. How are program staff involved in the process for supported employment placement/ on-the-job training/delivery of ongoing services for these consumers?

5. What special accommodations have been developed and implemented in response to the disabilities represented by the supported employment consumers? Please identify below the types of accommodations provided and the funding source for each.

Accommodation	# Of Times Used	Funding Source

C. EFFECTIVE JOB COACH CHARACTERISTICS

1a. How many job coaches currently work in the supported employment program?

16

1b. With how many supported employment consumers does the "average" job coach work at any one time?

5

1c. Does the job coach/consumer ratio vary according to client disability or type of employment position? If so, please explain. Yes. The ratio of job coach to consumers will vary according to employment position and placement type (individual placement vs. enclave vs. job cluster). The ratio may also sometimes vary according to disability, level of severity, or position in the placement process (active on-the-job training vs. follow-along).

2. Describe in detail the set of activities most commonly performed by the job coaches in the supported employment program.

On-the-job training

Advocacy for the worker

Employer training

Case management

Quality control

Co-worker interpersonal relations

EXAMPLE

3. What minimum academic, skill, and experience requirements have been identified as describing an especially effective job coach?

Minimum academic requirements include a high school diploma, although preference is given to college credits or a degree. Experience in training techniques and behavior management/ modification is desirable. Experience working in business and industry is valuable, including skills in good customer/ consumer service.

4. What is the "average" academic level, skill level and experience level of the program's job coaches?

40% have college degrees
10% have associate degrees
20% have some college credit
30% have high school diplomas plus hands-on experience

All have had some level of experience working with persons with disabilities.

5. In job coach recruiting efforts, how can minimum requirements and additional characteristics be used in order to identify those persons who will most likely be effective as a job coach?

Additional desirable characteristics include record-keeping ability, planning and coordinating activities on a daily basis, training of other persons, and some verbalization of values orientation similar to that of the supported employment program.

6. What hourly salaries do your job coaches currently earn? How do salaries vary according to experience and specific job responsibilities, or as a function of the funding source?

$8.00 - 10.50/hour. Salaries vary according to education and demonstrated skills level, experience, number of people being trained and/or maintained, and job responsibilities required by individual placements.

EXAMPLE

COMMENTS OR OTHER PROGRAM-RELATED INFORMATION YOU WOULD CARE TO PROVIDE:

EXAMPLE

ALL THE INFORMATION INCLUDED ABOVE IS ACCURATE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE.

	Director of Supported Employment	February 28, 1992
Signature	Title	Date

RETURN TO: **Regional Rehabilitation Exchange**
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 East Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 476-6861 Ext. 230 (Voice) Ext. 304 (TDD)

SOUTHWEST EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY
211 East Seventh Street, Austin, Texas 78701-3281
(512) 476 - 6861 (Voice/TDD)
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